

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR CARGO SCREENING TESTED AT LOGAN

WASHINGTON, DC— Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, joined Craig Coy, CEO of Massport, at Boston Logan International Airport today to unveil the first airport test for electronic screening of air cargo stowed on commercial flights. With this Massport test program, Logan Airport will become the first airport to electronically scan a limited amount of air cargo in order to evaluate and assess the feasibility of such a program and develop the required operational components.

Rep. Markey said, "Since September 11, Logan Airport has been a national leader in developing and implementing strategies to thwart terrorism. Under Craig Coy and his able staff, Boston residents should be confident that everything that can be done is being done to make certain that no successful terrorist attack is carried out at Logan. Massport should be commended for testing new electronic screening of air cargo, because nationwide it remains a huge loophole in our passenger plane security system."

"As the Transportation Security Administration takes away passengers' nail clippers, passengers are biting their nails worrying that the cargo being loaded underneath them is currently unscreened and un-inspected. It is reassuring to know that Logan Airport is taking the necessary steps to close this gaping loophole in our passenger airplane system," Rep. Markey concluded.

Rep. Markey has introduced the Universal Screening of Air Cargo Act (USA Cargo Act), H.R. 2455 requiring the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to implement physical screening and inspection of air cargo on passenger planes. Rep. Markey's amendment to force TSA to screen all cargo on passenger planes to the Homeland Security spending bill was passed by an overwhelming margin in the House of Representatives in June (274-147). But it was deleted by the Republican Congressional leadership behind closed doors in the Conference Committee, and signed by the President at the beginning of October.

The initial test period will run for approximately 30 days and be staffed by employees of L-3 Communications Security and Detection Systems utilizing their state-of-the-art x-ray cargo screening equipment. Additional tests of similar duration with different versions of L-3 hardware devices are also planned. The current testing phase includes the screening of entire trucks loaded with aircraft-bound cargo. The pilot program as a whole is intended only to determine the feasibility of air cargo security scanning and is not intended as a security procedure at this time.

In addition to L-3 Communications, Massport will explore opportunities with other companies, technologies, and procedures.

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